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# The St. Paul Voice



Sample St. Paul Page 8

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Your Community News & Information Source

April 2025



## Spring Crawl begins on the West Side

Jake Spitzack  
Staff Writer

With winter in the rearview mirror, it's finally time to stretch those legs and enjoy the sunshine, and what better way to do it than with St. Paul's biannual art crawl. This spring, it's being held over three weekends, with participating sites open based on what city ward they're located in. The West Side and Downtown, both in Ward 2, will kick off the fun April 25-27. Wards 5-7 will run May 2-4, and Wards 1, 3 and 4 will host events May 9-11. A full list of participating sites and what they offer is below.

One venue that has picked up considerable steam in recent years is F-O-K Studios at 106 W. Water St. on the West Side. It resides in the historic Farwell, Ozmun, Kirk & Co. factory building that was transformed into artist studios many years ago and recently has been the cornerstone of a new housing district dubbed Farwell-on-Water. During the Crawl, F-O-K visitors will be able to explore three floors of artist studios and a gallery space, getting the chance to meet more than 50 resident and guest

**Art Crawl / Page 4**

## Unleash your inner farmer

Opportunities abound at area community gardens



Submitted photo

Planting day at the Capitol View Communal Garden and Orchard.

Tim Spitzack  
Editor

If you think the quality of fruits and vegetables in supermarkets these days has diminished, your observation is not off-base. According to a 2024 National Library of Medicine report, the nutritional quality of food worldwide has declined significantly over the past 70-plus years due to changes in farming techniques, artificial fertilization, pesticides, the cultivation of high-yielding varieties and environmental factors that deplete the soil. Apples, oranges, bananas and tomatoes, for example, have lost 25-50% nutritional density since

the 1940s. To combat this trend, many have turned to growing food themselves, either in their own backyard or a community garden. While there is a fair amount of work involved, any avid gardener will tell you it's worth the effort because you can enjoy nutritious, fresh produce within minutes or days of harvest.

There are other benefits as well. Numerous studies show that gardening is a source of exercise that helps improve strength, balance and flexibility, and improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression and stress. Community gardens benefit neighborhoods by

**Gardening / Page 6**

## DARTS president to retire; reflects on a decade of change

Jake Spitzack  
Staff Writer

Over the past 10 years, DARTS president Ann Bailey has accomplished a great deal. She expanded the nonprofit's programming and reach, and also guided it across its 50-year milestone and through a major financial shift. Through it all, she saw firsthand the difference that community makes in the lives of seniors. Although her devotion to the organization remains strong, she recently announced her retirement, effective July 1. The DARTS board of directors is now seeking a new leader to take the reins by June to allow time for transition.

In recognition of her accomplishments and the lasting impact she made on Dakota County, Bailey received a Legacy Award from the Dakota County Regional Chamber last year. Additionally, under her leadership, DARTS has been recognized by the Chamber as nonprofit of the year, business of the year, and a champion of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Last year, DARTS recruited more Spanish-speaking staff and began hosting Café y Conversaciones, a monthly social and game hour at the DARTS office where members of the Latino community can voice concerns and discuss issues for which they need support.

Bailey learned about DARTS  
**DARTS / Page 2**

## Wentworth Library to close for yearlong renovation

Jake Spitzack  
Staff Writer

On April 7, Wentworth Library in West St. Paul will close for the start of a yearlong \$7.4 million renovation project. During the closure, temporary library space will be located on the second floor of the Dakota County Northern Service Center, 1 Mendota Road W., West St. Paul.

Visitors will be able to pick up holds, browse a limited collection of materials and use self-checkout, and access computers, copiers and printers on weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Some staff will be present.

Last renovated in 2008, Wentworth Library is one of 10 branches of the Dakota County Library system. Work includes infrastructure upgrades, moving the multi-

stall public restrooms in the entryway further inside the building, relocating all nine study rooms and making them handicap-accessible, adding meeting and conference rooms, and replacing furniture. Relocating the study rooms from the southern wall to the center of the building will allow for better temperature control in the rooms, which has been known to fluctuate, allow

staff to better see inside the rooms, and provide more daylight for library users. Six of the rooms will be for individual use and three will accommodate two people.

The large meeting room near the entryway will remain and another room is being added that can seat up to 14. The existing medium-sized meeting room will be updated, and a program room will be added.

Program rooms are a new concept that the County first launched at the Kaposia Library in South St. Paul, built last year. These multifunction rooms feature specialized equipment like sewing machines and 3D printers and are open for arts and crafts and other programs. The one at Wentworth will have a sink, storage space and furniture that can be reconfigured for groups of

varying sizes.

The children's area will get a large interactive play feature and a calming room for kids with sensory sensitivities. The space will also be revamped to be more welcoming for older kids, and a teen area will remain.

"Another space that will be new to this location is an enclosed quiet zone,"

**Library closure / Page 3**



# DARTS

from page 1

through personal experience, when her dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and getting to the point where he couldn't live by himself any longer. While Bailey was exploring the options for her dad, someone suggested she call DARTS. She made the call and spoke with a caregiver coach who listened to her concerns and offered resources to help. She was so

impressed that she eventually joined its board of directors. She served in that role for five years before becoming the organization's fourth president in 2015.

"I get little snapshots in my head like a photo album," Bailey said in a recent interview. "I remember a [door greeter] volunteer sitting down with me when she was turning 90 to let me know that she made a plan of what she wanted to accomplish in the next 10 years. Just hearing her

story and understanding how DARTS had helped her for 20 years, giving her that meaningful connection, volunteer opportunity, and knowledge that people needed her when she didn't have a lot of other people in her life.... I think we all want to be needed, and those kinds of moments have really stuck with me."

Perhaps DARTS' most well-known service is its \$2 bus loops, which operate on Wednesdays and give seniors an opportunity to go shop-

ping and get to appointments. Another program that has become increasingly popular since its launch in 2022 is The Breathing Space, which pairs volunteers with older adults – many struggling with memory issues – so their caregivers can have a 4-hour break and the adults can socialize. It's held 10 a.m.-2 p.m., each Thursday at Augustana Lutheran Church in West St. Paul and the same time each Friday at Easter Lutheran Church in Eagan. According to Bailey,



Ann Bailey

about 20% of the population in Minnesota is age 60 or older and caregiver support is becoming increasingly necessary to help prevent burnout and isolation.

DARTS volunteers also help with simple home repairs, lawn work, grocery shopping and other household tasks. Last summer, the organization received a \$267,000 Live Well at Home matching grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to begin offering those home services in southern Ramsey County through August 2026. It also began offering caregiver support programming in southern Washington County under Bailey's leadership.

DARTS serves nearly 2,200 people annually – about two-thirds of whom live alone – and is funded through grants, fees for services, and donations from businesses and organizations. Its low-cost services help seniors save money and reduce the need for them to do potentially dangerous household chores that may involve lifting heavy objects, climbing ladders and more.

When Bailey joined DARTS, its budget had recently been slashed from \$6 million to \$2 million due to the Met Council awarding its transportation contracts to for-profit providers. In 2018, she and the DARTS board of directors decided to sell three-fourths of their West St. Paul campus at 1645 Marthaler Ln. to be made into affordable apartments for seniors. This decision provided a financial boost to the organization.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, DARTS transportation services came to a screeching halt and about half of its home cleaning services were put on pause. However, during that time its volunteers regularly called clients who were no longer receiving services just to check in on them, and they helped other community organizations like Neighbors, Inc., which was struggling with a lack of

volunteers. "I thought, 'wow, I could be the person to shut the doors forever,' and knew I couldn't let that happen without taking action," said Bailey.

Looking ahead, she said that 2025 may have unique funding challenges if the Trump administration's proposed changes to Medicaid spending are approved, and that some people who depend on Social Security payments might not be able to continue to live where they want.

"Nonprofits exist because we're filling gaps that other people don't want to fill because they're not the profit generators," said Bailey. "Funding will always be a challenge."

Recruiting volunteers is also an ongoing task for DARTS, especially since more people are beginning to help on a "gig-basis" rather than making a weekly or monthly commitment. However, Bailey said many community groups, sports teams and businesses still show up with great numbers to help with annual events like spring and fall cleanups.

Founded in 1974, the nonprofit was established as part of a Community Education service designed to transport older adults to Inver Hills Community College for learning opportunities. Its name was an acronym for Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors but in 2008 the organization rebranded to simply DARTS.

"I think we've done a lot in the last 10 years to really be present in the community and help individuals and businesses understand what we do," said Bailey. "I'm so proud of the team that we have and the heart and the head that they bring every day to look at how we can we make a difference for somebody."

For more information, call 651-455-1560 or visit [dartsconnects.org](http://dartsconnects.org).

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# Library closure

from page 1

said Dakota County project manager Trish Bremer. “We will have a lot of seating out in the open area so people can lounge and read at their leisure but if people want the more intentional quiet space to do ‘heads down’ work or to just escape, we will have a room that is intended for that... the use of libraries really is diverse now.”

Leo A Daly was hired as the design consultant last year and a construction bid is expected to be awarded

to a developer at the end of March.

“Dakota County has a history of renovating our libraries on a [15-year] cycle to make sure we can stay current, and one doesn’t get left behind,” said Bremer. “We completed that last cycle with the new construction of the Kaposia Library that opened just last year, and now we’re starting our next cycle with Wentworth.”

The main goal of the previous cycle was to maximize

space so a lot of libraries got additions and new large meeting rooms for community use. The next cycle is primarily focused on improving accessibility and updating mechanical, electrical, plumbing and security systems. One other goal is to ensure libraries continue responding to user needs, which have been changing in recent years. Bremer said there’s been less demand for books and other printed materials and more requests for meeting rooms, socializing spaces and electronic devices.



Relocating study rooms from the southern wall to the center of the building will provide more daylight for library users.

## Shred event

The City of West St. Paul is hosting a paper shred event 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday, April 12 at the West St. Paul Sports Complex parking lot at 1650 Oakdale Ave. Residents of West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Sunfish Lake and Lilydale are welcome to bring confidential documents to shred. For more information, visit [wspmn.gov](http://wspmn.gov).

## Egg hunt

West St. Paul Parks and Recreation is sponsoring an egg hunt at 10 a.m., Satur-

day, April 19 at the ballfields at Harmon Park, 230 Bernard St. W. This free event is for ages 3-12. Participants are encouraged to arrive early as egg collection happens quickly.

## Rummage sale

St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, 700 Wesley Ln., Mendota Heights, is holding its annual Rummage Sale 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, April 26. Proceeds will fund mission projects locally, nationally and internationally. For more information, call 651-452-5683.

## Charity hockey game

West St. Paul Police and South Metro Fire will face off against St. Paul Police in a charity hockey game at 3 p.m., Saturday, April 19 at the West St. Paul Ice Arena, 60 Emerson Ave. W. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth ages 11 and older. Proceeds benefit the family of St. Paul Police Officer Shawn Filiowich, who passed away on January 4 of pancreatic cancer, and retired St. Paul Police Sgt. Donny Grundhauser, who has colorectal cancer. The

event includes a raffle and an after party in the parking lot with food and beer, and music by Tim Sigler from 5-7 p.m.

## Sospiri di Tempeste

West Side based chamber ensemble Sospiri will perform a show featuring weather-inspired baroque music, 4 p.m., Saturday, April 5 at Olivet Congregational in St. Paul, and 4 p.m., April 6 at the Bakken Museum in Minneapolis. For more information, visit [sospiri.org](http://sospiri.org).

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**Publisher & Editor:**  
Tim Spitzack  
[tim@stpaulpublishing.com](mailto:tim@stpaulpublishing.com)

**Copy Editor:**  
Leslie Martin

**Media & Marketing Manager:**  
Jake Spitzack  
[jake@stpaulpublishing.com](mailto:jake@stpaulpublishing.com)

**Contributors:**  
Leonor Villasuso Rustad  
Peter Majerle  
William Gustavo Franklin Torres  
José William Castellanos  
Roger Fuller  
Carrie Classon  
Joe Atkins  
Dawn Wambeke

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# Art Crawl

from page 1

artists who specialize in everything from painting to ceramics, photography to woodworking, and much more. Musicians will perform on the third-floor stage every day, starting with Ken Takata Ensemble, 6-7 p.m., and Nathan Hanson Trio, 8-9 p.m. Additionally, the Egg Roll Queen food truck will be onsite all weekend and Boca Chica will be providing free chips, salsa and guacamole beginning Saturday at noon. Complimentary sparkling water, coffee and other drinks will be served, and free parking is available during the event in the FOK building lot and the adjacent All Inc. lot. Hours are 5-9 p.m., Friday; noon-8 p.m., Saturday; and noon-5 p.m., Sunday.

“The West Side is such a vibrant community,” said F-O-K site coordinator Christy Dickinson, noting that the art community there is sometimes overshadowed by the Lowertown art district in downtown St. Paul. “I love its history. The immigrants that are here and how

it’s really a great multicultural community.... It’s growing, and it’s great to see all the residential and other developments that are happening and bringing a new light and new energy. I think it’s the next great place to be.”

Dickinson has been an artist in the St. Paul area for more than 30 years and has had a studio at the building for more than two. She’s an abstract painter who creates large pieces ranging from 6- to 30-square-feet and will be premiering 10 works during the Crawl. She was quick to credit Buhl Investors – the developers of the Farwell-on-Water district – with centering their development around artists, and said it’s the most supportive artists community she’s been a part of, having a good mixture of new and established artists. Among them are the historic Old Town artists, a group that originally was in Lowertown but moved to F-O-K when their buildings were converted to residential use. In addition to upgrading the FOK building to create art-



Submitted photo

In addition to the Crawl, F-O-K artists curate work in the gallery space and open their studio doors the first Friday of every month.

ist studios, education space, a lounge, stage and gallery, Buhl Investors recently created the Harbourline and Essex apartment buildings at Farwell-on-Water.

On the first Friday evening of every month, F-O-K artists curate work in the gallery space and open their studio doors, and musicians take to the stage. Dickinson encourages people to attend the May 2 First Friday to purchase works they saw there during the Crawl and to join the Crawl Afterparty beginning at 9 p.m.

and featuring local band Woolly Mac.

“To be able to see working studios is really important because you get to see behind how you typically see an artist,” said Dickinson. “It’s just a great opportunity for people to converse with artists directly and to buy directly from artists and know that 100% of the money is going to the artist.... You can get some really great pieces and it’s a really great way to build or start a collection.” She added that she’s in discussions with some Lowertown sites who also want to start

hosting First Friday events.

Holding the Crawl across multiple weekends allows artists to support their fellow creators in other areas of the city and makes it possible for the public to visit more districts rather than choosing one or two. This will be the first Crawl that F-O-K will compete with other larger venues in Ward 2, including Schmidt Artist Lofts on West Seventh Street and a handful of sites in Lowertown.

For a full lineup of performances, visit [fokcreatives.square.site](http://fokcreatives.square.site).

Here is a list of all participating sites. All venues were given multiple chances to provide details, and information was accurate as of press time. The Crawl has been organized by the St. Paul Art Collective since 1977. For more information, visit [stpaulartcollective.org](http://stpaulartcollective.org).

## Ward 2

**Art of Counseling**, 275 4th St. E.; April 25, 5-10 p.m., and April 26, noon-8 p.m. Twelve artists displaying paintings, photography, chalk pastel, ink, encaustic art, fiber arts, wall hangings, sculpture, assemblage and more. “Reflections of the Self: Art and Inner Harmony” art show in Suite #301. The site also features a rummage sale by artists, featuring artwork, handmade goods, art supplies, used studio gear, books and more.

**Burl Gallery**, 308 E. Prince St.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and April 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. “KALEIDOSCOPE II” exhibit featuring 70 pieces of art created by 70 local artists. Free admission. Artist celebration reception held 5-8 p.m., April 26.

**Calendula Gallery**, 275 E. 4th St.; April 25, 6-9



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**Holy Thursday, April 17**  
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**Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 19**  
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p.m.; April 26, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and April 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Discover the work of 23 artists displaying paintings, pottery, mixed media, woodwork, photography and digital art in the gallery and neighboring dining hall.

**Erta Ale**, 308 E. Prince St.; April 25, 6-9 p.m.; April 26, noon-9 p.m.; and April 27, noon-6 p.m. This Ethiopian restaurant will display paintings by two Ethiopian born artists.

**F-O-K Studios**, 106 W. Water St.; April 25, 5-9 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. More than 50 artists showcasing paintings, jewelry, sculptures, mixed media, photography and more, from open studios and gallery space. Live entertainment all three days. Free chips, salsa and guacamole from Boca Chica starting at noon on Saturday, and Egg Roll Queen food truck onsite all weekend. Complimentary refreshments also provided. Free parking available in F-O-K Studios lot and adjacent All Inc. lot.

**Friedli Gallery**, 943 W. 7th St.; April 26, noon-7 p.m., and April 27, noon-5 p.m. Five local artists selling

paintings, ceramics, textiles, book arts and more. Also includes the gallery's 4th Annual Book Arts Exhibition. Located one block West of the Schmidt Artist Lofts.

**Lost Fox**, 213 4th St. E.; April 25-26, 8 a.m.-1 a.m., and April 27, 8 a.m.-11 p.m. This coffee shop, restaurant and bar will feature works of two artists, and possibly live music.

**Lowertown Lofts Artists Cooperative**, floors 3-5, 255 E. Kellogg Blvd.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, approximately 35 artists will display paintings, ceramics, mixed media, textiles, jewelry, home goods and more from galleries and artist studios. Music and performances will take place. Enter through the alley connecting Wall and Wacouta.

**Nine Lives Thrift**, 1165 7th St. W.; April 25-26, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., and April 27, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. This thrift shop will display work from two photographers, and offer a live photo shoot 6-8 p.m. on Saturday. Wine available all weekend.

**Owl's Eye Art Collective**, 340 N. Sibley St.; April 25,



Artwork by Sara Tibbetts, who will show her work at the Tilsner Artist Lofts in Lowertown.

6-10 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. Eight artists will showcase printmaking, painting, photography, ceramics and jewelry. Includes opportunities to make your own intaglio print and create a personalized gemstone bracelet. Wine and appetizers on Friday. Entrance is behind the Sibley/4th Street Gold Line Bus stop.

**Pig's Eye Pottery**, 1163 7th St. W.; April 25, 5-8

p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-4 p.m. Five artists will show ceramics, painting and jewelry in a gallery. Complimentary refreshments and free street parking.

**Schmidt Artist Lofts**, 900 7th St. W.; April 25, 6-9 p.m.; April 26, noon-7 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. More than 80 artists will show paintings, illustrations, graphic design, collages, printmaking, pho-

tography, ceramics, fiber art, jewelry, comic books, children's books, wood furniture, handmade brooms, botanical displays, dried floral wall art, shadow boxes, suncatchers, candles, magnet art, sand art and more. Art will be across five floors in common areas, galleries and studios, as well as in the tap room and the rooftop atrium. Open Palette live art demonstrations will happen on the rooftop and walk-in dance lessons are offered 1-3 p.m., Saturday. Food trucks will be onsite. Free street parking. Enter at Door 1.

**Tilsner Artists Lofts**, 300 Broadway St.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Twenty artists will showcase mixed media, draping and fashion, paintings and more, from artist studios and hallway spaces. Pop-ups in the back lot of the building, weather permitting. Will host performance artists and offer opportunities for karaoke and open mic sessions throughout the weekend.

**Union Depot**, 214 4th St. E., April 25, 5-9 p.m.; April 26; 10 a.m.-7 p.m.;

and April 27, noon-6 p.m. Shop local artists including painters, photographers, mixed media artists, jewelry designers and apothecary creators. Hours are

**Wards 5-7**

**ArT @ 967 Payne**, 967 Payne Ave.; May 2, 5-9 p.m., and May 3, noon-8 p.m. Twenty artists will display paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, photographs, jewelry, ceramics and more from artist studios and wall displays. Opening reception for gallery exhibit "Our World We Live In" is May 2. Artist question and answer panel on Friday and Saturday, and live performances expected throughout the weekend. Food trucks may be on site. Free parking in the back lot or on street.

**Urban Roots**, 1110 Payne Ave.; May 3, 1-5 p.m. Three artists will display mixed media, handmade paper, basket weaving, handmade journals, printmaking and baked goods, from a gallery and outdoors, weather permitting. Music and crafts onsite.

**Art Crawl / Page 7**

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# Gardening

from page 1

promoting social interaction, creating green space, and improving air and soil quality. Some gardeners have gone a step further and use their hobby to fight food insecurity by giving away the produce they grow. According to the University of Minnesota's Healthy Food, Healthy Lives Institute and the Institute on the Environment, food insecurity in Minnesota has surged as much as 40% since the pandemic.

## Gardening season

In the coming weeks, the soil will be turned at community gardens across the city and people will be plodding through the muddy rows to dig in the dirt and plant seeds. If you'd like to give gardening a try, several opportunities await. All gardens are open to everyone, regardless of residency.

## GROWS

Growing Resilience on the West Side (GROWS), a coalition of organizations

and individuals working on food justice, is looking for gardeners for its communal gardens, which allow multiple people to help tend a garden and enjoy the bounty of it. All food is available free to anyone in the community who wants or needs it.

The Capitol View Communal Garden and Orchard, located at Smith and Cherokee avenues near the Smith Avenue High Bridge, is now in its fourth season. The 8,500-square-foot site is owned by the City of St. Paul and operates with the help of some 200 volunteers. It has 20 organic planting beds for vegetables and at least 20 fruit and nut trees, including apple, cherry, serviceberry, pear, plum and hazelnut. Paul Pfeiffer, who has lived on the West Side for nearly 20 years, is one of 15-20 volunteers who show up weekly during the growing season for watering, weeding and other chores. Thursdays are the designated work day, from 6 p.m.-dark.

"This is a very different model," he said. "There are no work requirements or fees. It's community-led, not hierarchal. Anyone can help, and anyone can harvest. I'm always asked, 'can I come and take some stuff,' and the



Submitted photo

Master gardeners use a section of the garden at First Presbyterian in South St. Paul to run seed trials for the University of Minnesota and to grow produce for the local food shelf. They also teach free classes and demonstrate organic gardening methods.

answer is always, 'yes, when it's ripe.'"

Pfeiffer said the garden has grown every year, both in size and popularity.

"Every year it grows bigger and more exciting, but bigger isn't what we're after - we're going for community," he said. "It's a very beautiful and welcoming space, and a fun environment. I've seen people doing yoga there, wandering the beds, writing in journals, and of course gardening.... It has allowed me to know my neighbors better because we work side by side and share with each other, no strings attached."

Volunteers are also needed at the three other communal garden sites: the Robert Street Garden at Robert and Morton streets, Garden of Good Hearts at 441 Waba-

sha St. S. and a plot at 88 Cesar Chavez. Volunteers assist with planting, weeding and food distribution. Like the Capitol View Communal Garden and Orchard, anyone may harvest ripe produce from these gardens. Educational presentations are offered during the summer, and the produce is given away weekly from stands at Parque Castillo on Sunday afternoons, and Beautiful Laundrette, 625 Stryker Ave., on Wednesday afternoons. Information signage will be installed at all sites this summer to help people better understand the concept of a communal garden and to direct them to other community gardens in the region. For more information on GROWS, visit [mfn.org/take-action/grows](http://mfn.org/take-action/grows) or contact Leah Mathiason at [leah@rustypatchfarm.com](mailto:leah@rustypatchfarm.com).

Looking to plant your own garden? You can get free seed packets at the West Side Seed Library at Riverview Library, 1 George St. E. The seeds are provided by community gardeners and through other donations.

## Dodge Nature Center gardens

Dodge Nature Center runs its community garden program May through October at its main property at 1701 Charlton St., West St. Paul, and its Shepard Farm site at 8946 70th St. S., Cottage Grove. For \$135, gardeners receive a 15-by-15-foot plot, the use of tools, water and compost, and enrollment in an organic gardening class. Registration opens in early March and runs through Memorial Day, or until all plots are filled. Dodge's farm manager, Don Oberdorfer, said the gardens are particularly attractive to people who live in apartments because they don't have to buy and store their own tools.

"All you have to do is show up and supply the seeds and labor," he said.

The popularity of the garden spiked during the pandemic and remains high. Before 2020, about 40 families participated. Today, the garden in West St. Paul is used by 70 families, and the newer garden in Cottage

Grove by 25 families. An orientation session is held at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 9 in West St. Paul, and Thursday, April 10 in Cottage Grove. The class on organic gardening practices is offered at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 16 in West St. Paul, and Thursday, April 17 in Cottage Grove. For more information, call 651-789-5285 or visit [dodge.naturecenter.org](http://dodge.naturecenter.org).

## South St. Paul Community Garden

The City of South St. Paul has operated a community garden for three decades. It attracts gardeners from South St. Paul and the surrounding communities, including St. Paul and Minneapolis. It has 119 plots and is located near the DNR boat launch and city compost site off Verderosa Avenue, near the I-494 Wakota Bridge. Residents may sign up for a plot beginning Mar. 24, and nonresidents on April 7. Plots are 15-by-20-feet and surrounded by fencing with a lock-secured gate. A total of nine water spigots are available. Rates are \$21.43 for residents and \$32.14 for nonresidents. Residents aged 55 and older pay \$16.07. For more information, call South St. Paul Parks and Recreation at 651-366-6200 or visit [southstpaul.org](http://southstpaul.org).

## Garden on the Hill

First Presbyterian in South St. Paul, 535 20th Ave. N., has been hosting a community garden for a dozen years. It has 20 fenced-in plots, ranging from \$40 for a 10-by-15-foot plot to \$50 for a 10-by-20-foot plot. Master gardeners use a section to run seed trials for the University of Minnesota and to grow produce for the local food shelf, and they also teach free classes and demonstrate organic gardening methods. Experienced gar-

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deners are usually on site to share their knowledge and skills with gardening novices.

Since its inception, gardeners have donated nearly 11,000 pounds of organic vegetables. All plots are for organic gardening, meaning no commercial chemicals

are allowed in the garden, including herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.

Gardeners are required to maintain their plot, weed the path around it and attend a work session in the spring and fall. Garden coordinator Julie Close said people are attracted to the garden for its serene location, and the opportunity to grow their own food and learn techniques from master gardeners. A kick-off meeting is at 1 p.m., Sunday, April 13. For more information, call 651-459-5607 or visit [fpccsp.org](http://fpccsp.org).

**Farmers markets**

Farmers markets are a great place to find fresh produce – without the work. The St. Paul Farmers Market, which operates year-round, begins its summer season in late April at the downtown market. It also hosts neighbor-

hood markets in South St. Paul, West St. Paul and several other communities during the summer and fall. All food is grown within 100 miles of St. Paul. For more details, visit [stpaulfarmersmarket.com](http://stpaulfarmersmarket.com).

The independent West

Side Farmers Market is open 9 a.m.-noon every Saturday from June through October at Icy Cup, 63 George St. W. Community members may also grow their own produce in a small plot next to the building.

# Art Crawl

from page 5

**Wards 1, 3 and 4**

**E&L Bindery Building**, 708 Vandalia St.; May 9, 6-10 p.m., and May 10, noon-8 p.m. Ten artists will display paintings, drawings, photography, bookbindings and stone carvings. E & L Bindery will be open on the first floor with artists, and open studios will be on the third floor. Snacks and beverages available, and a tarot card reader onsite. Park in the lot or on Vandalia Street and enter next to the loading dock.

**DOW Gallery**, 2242 University Ave. W.; May 9, 5-9 p.m., and May 10, noon-8 p.m. Forty artists will showcase painting, sculpture, photography, mixed media, wood working, notecards, and jewelry. Complimentary refreshments. Free parking on the street and in the Wright Building lot. Not handicap accessible.

**House of heART 2**, 763 Holly Ave.; May 9, 4-9 p.m.; May 10, noon-8 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. Find 28 artists displaying paintings, photography, ceramics and mixed media across three floors of an Airbnb home, and outside, weather permitting. Complimentary refreshments and solo music performances throughout the weekend.

**Midway Clay**, 1708 University Ave. W.; May 9, 4-8 p.m.; May 10, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. More than a dozen artists will showcase ceramics as well as some 2D art from a gallery and studio space. Light refreshments available. Street parking.

**Open Art Space**, 2147 University Ave. W.; May 9, 6-9 p.m.; May 10, noon-8 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. Ten artists in gallery, hallway and studio spaces will showcase wax paintings, photography, collage and mixed media, ceramics, pastel drawing, greeting cards and more. Light refreshments available and a family friendly art activity will be held Saturday and Sunday. Parking in the lot behind the building.

**Spatial Effects**, 1759 Selby Ave.; May 9, 4-6 p.m.; May 10, noon-6 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. Nearly 30 artists in two gallery spaces will display paintings, drawings, photography, stone and metal sculpture, ceramics, glass paintings, mixed media, carved gourds and more. Also showing furniture by Third Street Studios. Refreshments available all days and live music by the Joel Shapira Jazz Trio 2-4 p.m., Saturday.

**Springboard for the Arts**, 262 University Ave. W.; May 10, noon-4 p.m. More than 40 artists with prints and printmaking art in the first floor community hall and on the front lawn. OG Za

Za Pizza Trailer will be onsite and interactive artist led activities from Street Corner Letterpress will take place. Free street parking.

**St. Paul Neighborhood Network**, 550 Vandalia St.; May 9, 6-8 p.m.; May 10, noon-4 p.m.; and May 11, 1-5 p.m. Short documentary screening from first-time filmmakers on Friday, with food available. Photography, art and storytelling exhibits, including works by 10 youth, on Saturday and Sunday. Park in the lot.

**University of Minnesota Goldstein Museum of Design**, level 2 of McNeal Hall (room #241), 1985 Buford Ave.; May 9-10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and May 11, noon-5 p.m. An exhibit featuring historical and contemporary letterpress prints, advertising

posters, wood type artifacts and graphic design pieces created using traditional printing techniques. Includes an interactive 2-color block printing installation. The site also has a window exhibit featuring clothing and textiles that use letters and numbers as design elements, reflecting their evolution from rare decorative motifs to bold statements in fashion and branding.

**Virginia St. Church**, 170 Virginia St., May 9-11. More than 20 artists will exhibit paintings, mosaics, quilting, ceramics, art glass, collages and drawings. Live music by Blues Stratum and other bands, and Liz Zini will play waltzes, tangos and the chicken dance on her accordion. Food available.

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Good Friday, April 18th  
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**EASTER**  
Vigil of Easter, April 19th at 8 PM

Easter Sunday, April 20th  
8 AM & 10:30 AM

Easter Monday, April 21st at 6:30 PM



# Arts & Entertainment

**Children's Museum**  
10 7th St. W.  
St. Paul  
651-225-6000  
mcm.org

"Dinosaurs: Land of Fire and Ice," through May 11. Travel back in time and discover what life was like when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Dig for fossils, explore a swampy bog and oozing volcano, climb through icy terrain and more.

**Exhibits and activities** include "The Scramble," "The Studio," "Creativity Jam," "Sprouts," "Our World," "Forces at Play," "Shipwreck Adventures" and "Imaginopolis." Tickets are \$17 on weekdays and \$19 on weekends. Admission is free the first Sunday of each month; reservations are required, and tickets are limited. The next free date is April 6.

**History Center**  
345 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul  
651-259-3000  
mnhs.org

"Girlhood (It's Complicated)," through June 1. This exhibit from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History features more than 100 objects that explore how young women have influenced politics, education, work, health and fashion.

"Reframing our Stories" is featured through October. The exhibit was created from a decades-old box of photographs simply labeled "Indians." Inside the box were dozens of pictures of Native community members, organizations, activities, and events that are relevant today.

"Our Home: Native Minnesota" features historic and contemporary photographs, maps and artifacts that show how Minnesota's native communities have retained cultural practices, teachings and values.

**Other exhibits** include "Minnesota's Greatest Generation," "Then Now Wow," "Grainland" and "Weather

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Permitting." Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and college students, and \$8 for children ages five to 17. Admission and parking are free on Thursdays, 4-8 p.m.

**History Theatre**  
30 E. 10th St.  
St. Paul  
651-292-4323  
Historytheatre.com

"Secret Warriors," Mar. 29-April 19. Inspired by the stories of the Japanese Americans who served as translators and interrogators for the U.S. Armed Forces, "Secret Warriors" highlights two men, Koji Kimura and Tamio Takahashi, who took extraordinary risks to save their fellow soldiers in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Discover their compelling personal journeys and heartfelt love stories set against the backdrop of the war and the incarceration of their families. From \$49.

**Landmark Center**  
75 5th St. W.  
St. Paul  
651-292-3225  
landmarkcenter.org

**Courtroom Concerts,** noon-1 p.m. on Thursdays. Music of Timothy C. Takach, April 3; Cléa Galhano, recorder, Tulio Rondón, cello, Tim Lovelace, piano, April 10; Amos Lucidi, piano, April 17; Lumina, April 24. Free.

**Skylark Opera Theatre,** 1-3 p.m., Sunday, April 6. Skylark Opera Theatre is

## Volunteer In Your Community

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"Mean Girls" is presented April 8-13 at the Ordway Center.

known for a wide-ranging repertoire of opera and musical theater. Free.

**Ballet Tuesdays,** noon-1 p.m. April 8. Ballet performances and demonstrations by Ballet Co.Laboratory. Free.

**Romanian Easter Traditions,** 1-3 p.m., each Sunday in April, except April 20. Visit the Romanian American Cultural Center to learn about painted eggs, Easter customs and painted icons on glass. Free.

**Urban Expedition: Venezuela,** 1-3 p.m., Sunday, April 13. Authentic music, food, dance performances and crafts. Free.

**BandWidth Community Band Festival,** noon-6 p.m., Sunday, April 27. Marches, concert band classics, pop, Broadway, and jazz music performed by some of the top volunteer-based ensembles in Minnesota.

**Woodturning demonstration,** 1-4 p.m., Sunday, Mar. 20 in the AAW Gallery of Wood Art. Free.

**Public Building Tour,** 12:30-1:15 p.m., every Sunday. Learn about the building's history, gangster connections and restoration.

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"When You're in the Mirror," through April 27. A offering of portraits that considers the repercussions of perception through a relational emphasis. Admission is free.

**Ordway Center**  
345 Washington St.  
St. Paul  
651-224-4222  
ordway.org

"Sister's Easter Catechism: Will My Bunny Go to Heaven?" 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Mar. 30. Sister answers timeworn questions of the Easter season like "Why isn't Easter the same day every year like Christmas?" and "Will my bunny go to heaven?" From \$43.

**Sona Jobarteh,** 7:30 p.m.,

Monday, Mar. 31. African Jobarteh blends traditional music, blues and Afropop. From \$54.

**Classic Albums Live: U2's "The Joshua Tree,"** 7:30 p.m., Friday, April 4. The entire album is performed live on stage. From \$40.

"Oceana" by **Border Crossing,** 8 p.m., Saturday, April 5. "Oceana" is a reinvention of the Bach cantata form for a modern age. From \$5.

"Sacred Voices" by **Vocalescence,** 4 p.m., Sunday, April 6. A concert of Sir James MacMillan songs, including "Seven Last Words from the Cross" and "The Sun Danced," based on the miraculous visions of Our Lady of Fatima to three Portuguese shepherd children in 1917. From \$26.

"Mean Girls," April 8-13. Cady Heron may have grown up on an African savanna, but nothing prepared her for the vicious ways of her strange new home in suburban Illinois. Soon, Cady falls prey to a trio of lionized frenemies led by the charming but ruthless Regina George. But when Cady devises a plan to end

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**St. Paul Chamber Orchestra concerts** - Mozart's 40th Symphony with Dmitry Sinkovsky, 11 a.m., Friday, April 11. Jasmine Chi plays Mozart's Second Flute Concerto, April 25-26. From \$16 for both concerts.

**Schubert Club concerts** - Musicians on the Rise: Student Competition Winners Recital, 1 p.m., Sunday, April 13. Witness the best of the local rising musical stars in piano, strings, voice, guitar, brass and woodwinds. Free. Jess Gillam, saxophone, will perform April 16-17. From \$28.

**The FAWK Hmong (+Friends) Super Show by Funny Asian Women Collective**, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 19. An evening of live standup, storytelling, sketches, and short films that celebrate what living in the U.S. for 50 years can do to Southeast Asians – and one Korean. From \$31.

**Park Square Theatre**

20 W. 7th Place  
St. Paul  
651-291-7005

[parksquaretheatre.org](http://parksquaretheatre.org)  
**Kevin Kling and Victor Zupanc**, 7 p.m., Saturday, Mar. 29. Heartfelt stories and songs to feed your soul and tickle your funny bone. From \$20.

**RiverCentre**

175 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul  
651-265-4800  
[rivercentre.org](http://rivercentre.org)

**Donnie Smith Bike Show**, Mar. 29-30. Includes a bike show with over 35 classes and 20 custom bikes, vendors and entertainment.

**Minnesota Roller Derby**, 6 p.m., Saturday, Mar. 29 and April 26. From \$22.

**People of Color Career Fair**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Tuesday, April 15. A networking and hiring event. Free.

**Science Museum of Minnesota**

120 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul

651-221-9444, [smm.org](http://smm.org)  
**"Butterfly Odyssey"** through September 1. An in-

teractive, maze-based exhibit that allows you to experience the fascinating behaviors and inspiring resilience of wild and farmed butterflies. The exhibit also examines how tropical butterfly farming can support the local community, impact the environment, and protect ecosystems around the world.

**Virtual Reality Transporter**, through December 2026. Use the VRT to hurtle through the cosmos at fantastic speeds, scuba dive into prehistoric seas, and join the astronauts of Apollo 11 as they moonwalk for the first time. \$9.95.

**Museum Nights**, 5-8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Explore museum galleries, check out special Science Live performances, enjoy

food and drink, then catch an Omnitheater show.

**OmniFest continues through April 13.** Includes: **"Extreme Weather"** - An up-close look at some of the most astonishing and potentially deadly natural phenomena. Learn what causes turbulent tornadoes, receding glaciers and rampant wildfires.

**"Cuba"** - Journey to the heart of the Caribbean through the eyes of those exploring under the ocean's surface and dancing in the streets of Havana.

**"Fungi Web of Life"** - The film unravels how plants and animals would not exist without mushrooms, molds, yeasts and toadstools.

**"Secrets of the Sea"** - From the smallest krill to the

largest whales, explore how ocean ecosystems depend on biodiversity and a surprising level of animal cooperation.

**"Stellar Tours: A Star is Born,"** Wednesday-Sunday. Follow the life cycle of a star through this live digital telescope show.

Tickets are \$34.95 for adults and \$24.95 for ages 4-17 and include an Omnitheater show.

**Xcel Center**

199 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul  
651-726-8240

[xcelenergycenter.com](http://xcelenergycenter.com)  
**Papa Roach and Rise Against**, 7 p.m., Sunday, April 13. From \$51.

**Comedian Tom Segura**, 7:30 p.m., Friday, April 18. From \$51.

**One Book | One Minnesota**

The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library is hosting One Book | One Minnesota, a statewide book club that invites Minnesotans of all ages to read a common title and discuss it together virtually. The title is "Where We Come From" by Diane Wilson, Sun Yung Shin, Shannon Gibney and John Coy. A virtual discussion with the authors is held at 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 29. The event is free, but registration is required. Visit [thefriends.org](http://thefriends.org).

**TPAC events**

Unless noted, all activities take place at Thompson Park Activity Center, 1200 Stassen Lane, West St. Paul. Events are for ages 55 and older. To register, call 651-403-8300.

**Pasque Flowers Blooming at Goat Prairie Remnant in Bloomington**, 10

a.m.-noon, Monday, April 7. See Pasque flowers in bloom during a visit to the Goat Prairie Remnant in Bloomington, 2201 W. 108th St. Registration required. \$3.

**Otterly Wonderful Otters**, 10-11 a.m., Tuesday, April 22. Facts and stories about river and sea otter history, anatomy, adaptations, lifestyles, key role in Alaskan history, and essential role in keeping our oceans and rivers healthy. Registration required. \$9.

**"Music From the World's Greatest Generation,"** 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, April 23. Iconic tunes from the Great Depression, WWII, big bands, and early country music, all enriched by engaging historical insights of the artists and eras that shaped them. \$10. Dessert included. Register by April 16.

**Paint Like Bob Ross: Moonscape**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Thursday, April 24. Work on

your latest pencil project. All levels welcome, from novice to skilled. Bring your own pencils and art equipment. Registration required. \$50.

**April Foolery: Nature Sense with Eloise Dietz**, 1-2:15 p.m., Tuesday, April 29. Nature facts, fiction, trivia and attempts at stumping the naturalist. Register by April 22. \$10.

**Nonfiction Book Club**, 1-2:30 p.m. the first Thursday of the month. \$10.

**Bridge - Home Before Dark**, 3-5:30 p.m. Mondays, April-October.

**State Capitol**

**Portraits of Indigenous Authors and Artists**, through June 30, at 3rd Floor Exhibit Gallery at the Minnesota State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Now featured is a collection of fine art photography by John Ratzloff. This project started when Ratzloff was invited to pho-

tograph the life and natural beauty of White Earth Nation. His photography honors the voices and legacies of Indigenous leaders, offering a unique visual narrative that celebrates their contributions to art, culture and advocacy. Open weekdays 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.

**Union Depot**

The following events are held at Union Depot, 214 4th St. E. For more information, visit [uniondepot.org/event-calendar](http://uniondepot.org/event-calendar).

**Station Sounds**, 6-8 p.m., Thursday, April 24. 1881 by Lake Elmo Inn presents a new musical artist/group every third Thursday of the month.

**Red Cross blood drive**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Thursday, April 17.

**Book discussion with author Nina Hamza** on her latest book "Samira's (Worst) Best Summer," 6-8

p.m., Wednesday, April 3.

**St. Paul Art Crawl**, April 25-27. Shop local artists at Union Depot including painters, photographers, mixed media artists, jewelry designers and apothecary creators. Come support local makers and bring home a new piece of art. Hours are 5-9 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday; noon-6 p.m., Sunday.

**Free yoga classes** are offered 5:30-6:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and 9-10 a.m., Saturdays.

**Games galore**, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. each Wednesday. Giant-size games are available or bring your own. Free. All ages.

**Public tour of Union Depot**, 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, April 2 and 16.

**Gatsby at 100**

The Minnesota Historical Society will present a collection of items pertaining to

"The Great Gatsby" and its author St. Paul native F. Scott Fitzgerald through May in the Gale Family Library at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul. Entry is free. The display is part of a series of programs this year marking the 100th anniversary of the classic novel's publication. Set in the Jazz Age of the 1920s, the novel explores ideas about class and society, materialism and the American Dream. Other events include "The Great Gatsby" read in full by various special guests, 1:30-7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 10 at The Minnesota History Center, and Books & Bars: "The Great Gatsby-A Graphic Novel Adaptation" by Katherine Woodman Maynard, 6:30-8 p.m., Tuesday, April 15 at Urban Growler, 2325 Endicott St., St. Paul.




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**Neighbors, Inc.**

Dawn Wambeke  
President & CEO



For more than half a century, Neighbors, Inc. has served as a safety net in our community, ensuring access to the basic human rights of food, clothing and community connections. We have not done this alone but in partnership with the community. Neighbors was founded by a group of dedicated volunteers and churches who recognized the need when thousands lost their

jobs as the stockyards began to decline due to changing market forces and the decentralization of the meat-packing industry. Since then, Neighbors' mission has been brought to life by thousands of dedicated volunteers and through community support of financial gifts, donated clothes and food. We are grateful that 50% of our funding is from community members, local businesses

and the faith community.

Today, the community stands ready to build on this beautiful foundation and launch Neighbors' next journey to ensure that all families have the opportunity for prosperity. I am excited to announce that Neighbors, Inc. was one of 28 organizations to be awarded the Transformative Career Pathways grant through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. This \$450,000 award will allow Neighbors to rapidly grow our Financial Empowerment Center and create even greater impact in our community. The Financial Empowerment Center will engage community members through integrated career training, employment and financial coaching. We

will focus on family-sustaining wages in a variety of high-demand fields such as manufacturing and trades, healthcare, the public sector and IT. Career training will be offered at community colleges and other training partners and will be available to help people in their educational endeavors, whether that is earning a certification needed in their current career or pursuing a new career.

Our dedicated team members are focused on holistic support services to assist community members with transportation, technology, childcare and so much more. Financial education services will be offered long-term including credit building, decreasing debt and increasing assets.

Our approach is informed

through a social capital lens and leveraging the tremendous strength of the community. We are thrilled to launch a volunteer division within our new Financial Empowerment Center. We welcome community members and businesses to join us through mentoring as experts in their industry, resume reviews, mock interviews, researching employment opportunities and financial education classes. If you or your company are interested in volunteering, contact Jesse Osvold at [jesse@neighborsmn.org](mailto:jesse@neighborsmn.org).

I cannot overstate how exciting a time it is at Neighbors! We are here to disrupt poverty and help community members take steps toward building generational wealth. Ultimately,

it is about changing the lives of individuals and families, which strengthens the bedrock of the communities we are so honored to serve.

You might be asking yourself, "How can I help?" Consider becoming a volunteer. No amount of time is too short or too long and our self-scheduling makes things a breeze. Other ways you can help include referring people to our array of services (we do not have a geographic boundary) or connect us to great businesses. In addition, we are seeking professional attire donations for our thrift store. As always, you can reach me directly at [dawn@neighborsmn.org](mailto:dawn@neighborsmn.org), 651-272-1135 or just stop on by.

Stay connected with Neighbors' latest updates at [neighborsmn.org](http://neighborsmn.org)

# POSTSCRIPT

## What Peter does

"What is the cat doing?" I asked my husband, Peter.

"He's levitating," Peter said. Or at least I thought that's what he said.

"The cat is levitating?"

"Meditating!"

"Oh."

We have a lot of conversations like this and I suspect Peter and I are not alone. I was lying in bed later that evening, imagining our cat, Felix, floating over the nightstand, and the thing that struck me was that Peter would take it in stride.

Peter and I will celebrate our 10th anniversary this week, which doesn't seem possible for two reasons. First, because it cannot be possible that 10 years have



**Carrie Classon**  
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passed since we got married, and second, because it cannot be possible there was ever a time I was not married to Peter.

In the past 10 years, I have learned that if the cat were to suddenly start levitating, Peter would not fly off the handle. He would do some

quick research and determine how frequent cat levitation was and if there was cause for concern. Will the cat return to normal gravity in time? Will we need to keep him on a harness?

I'd still be watching Felix floating 3 feet off the nightstand and Peter would already have a plan of action in place in case we should need to fetch the cat off the ceiling or retrieve him as he started to float out the window. My beloved would know what to do. This is what he does. It's not the only reason I love him but it is one of the reasons.

"Learned helplessness" is when a patient forgets how to make her own coffee (or buy it, for that matter), and everything required for her meal shows up, like magic, in the cupboard. That would be me. Peter occasionally expresses frustration if we run

out of something, because he has a secret inventory system that I'm entirely oblivious to. If I start eating an inordinate amount of tuna or honey or potatoes, we will suddenly run low and Peter does not allow us to run low on anything.

Peter plans our travels and pays the bills. He knows how I'm feeling before I do, which is handy because then I can just ask him.

"Why do I feel this way?" I'll ask.

"You've felt this way before," he'll remind me. "It will pass." And he's always right.

He does all these things because he cares for me. After 10 years I could easily take what he does for granted.

But I don't.

Because we weren't young when we married 10 years ago, and even then I knew

that coffee does not appear by magic and the bathroom is not automatically filled with toilet paper. I knew that problems must be solved, that life would serve up an increasing number of problems as we aged, and that having someone beside me to help solve those problems was a precious gift.

Peter often reminds me that we don't know if we will be given another day together or another 30 years. "But either way," he says, "it will be too short." And he is right.

But as long as we are together, I know he will be there to help figure out whatever comes our way. And so, no, I was not overly worried about the cat levitating yesterday. It would certainly be unusual, but it would be nothing that Peter couldn't handle.

Till next time.

## Heritage student wins Optimist essay contest

Liam C., a 5th-grade student at Heritage E-STEM Magnet School, won the 2024-2025 Optimist Essay Contest conducted by the Optimist Club of West St. Paul. His essay on the theme of "How Optimism Has Paved My Road to Success" earned him a gold medallion and a cash prize. In addition, his essay was sent to the district level to be judged against winning essays from other Optimist clubs in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Manitoba, Canada. The winner of that contest will receive a \$2,500 scholarship. Placing second was Amilia H., a 7th grader at Heritage E-STEM Magnet School. She received a silver medallion and a Crumbl Cookie gift card.

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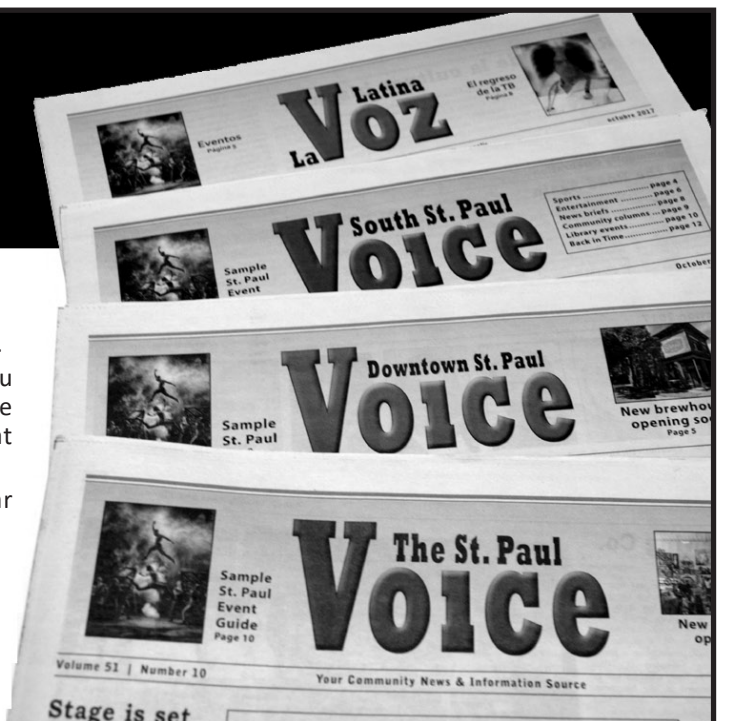
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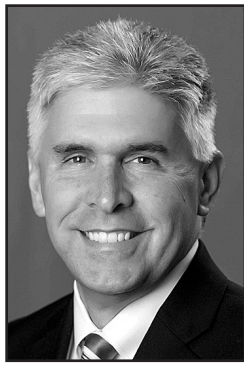




**Local libraries named best in Minnesota**

Dakota County's 10-branch library system, which includes Wentworth Library in West St. Paul and the newly opened Kaposia Library in South St. Paul, continues to receive accolades and set records for visitor engagement. Recognized as Minnesota's best library system by Minnesota Star Tribune readers last year, Dakota County Libraries have also been honored with the county's prestigious HEROES Award. This recognition highlights the success of the innovative self-service hours program, which has significantly extended access to library resources without increasing costs for taxpayers.

**Pioneering innovation and accessibility** - Residents of Dakota County have long appreciated our exceptional library system, and now the entire state is taking notice. Voted the best in Minnesota by Minnesota Star Tribune readers, Dakota County Libraries continue to lead in innovation, accessibility and community engagement. With 10 branches serving the county, these libraries are more than just places to borrow books. They are thriving centers for learning, connection and opportunity. From record-breaking numbers of



**Joe Atkins**  
Dakota County Commissioner

visits to the introduction of pioneering self-service programs, Dakota County Libraries are evolving to meet the changing needs of the community while remaining committed to their mission: providing free, accessible and enriching resources for all.

**Expanding access with self-service hours** - One of the most groundbreaking developments in the library system is the introduction and expansion of self-service hours. Now available at all 10 Dakota County branches, this program allows registered users to access library spaces and materials daily from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., including holidays. This extended availability benefits students, small businesses and families by providing greater flexibility in accessing library resources.

The program received the Dakota County's HEROES Award, which recognizes outstanding collaborative

efforts. Since its launch in 2023, over 5,000 customers have signed up, collectively logging more than 42,000 visits and 39,000 checkouts in 2024 alone. Community groups, scout troops and small businesses have taken advantage of extended meeting space availability, while individuals use the additional hours to study, work remotely and access digital resources. Safety remains a top priority, with all locations equipped with security cameras and strict adherence to library policies. Registration is simple: watch a brief training video, agree to a waiver, and receive an access card. To learn more, visit [www.dakotacounty.us/library](http://www.dakotacounty.us/library) and search "self-service."

**Wentworth Library: a new chapter for West St. Paul** - Exciting changes are coming to Wentworth Library in West St. Paul. After 32 years, this beloved community resource is undergoing a major renovation to modernize its spaces, enhance technology, and create a more welcoming and functional environment. Key improvements include:

- Expanded meeting and study areas for collaboration and quiet work
- Dedicated spaces for children and teens, includ-

ing interactive play areas

- For those who still prefer that old-fashioned library feel, a new quiet zone for reading and studying

- A calming room designed for individuals with sensory sensitivities

- Improved accessibility, updated technology and energy-efficiency upgrades

During renovation, Wentworth Library will close for several months starting in the spring. Library services will be available at a temporary location on the second floor of the Dakota County Northern Service Center, 1 Mendota Road W., West St. Paul, where visitors can pick up holds, browse materials and use computers and printers.

**Libraries: more than just books** - Today's libraries serve as vital community centers, offering far more than books. Dakota County Libraries provide:

- Free Wi-Fi, computer workstations and digital re-

sources

- Classes on job skills, technology and language learning

- Makerspaces, podcasting studios and creative workshops

- Social and community events for all ages

- Study spaces, quiet zones and meeting rooms for businesses and organizations

The opening of Kaposia Library in early 2024 further demonstrates Dakota County's commitment to modern, innovative library services. Already a popular gathering place, Kaposia Library exemplifies the future of libraries – dynamic, welcoming, and adaptable to the needs of all residents.

**A bright future for Dakota County Libraries** - With record-setting visits,

forward-thinking programs and major renovations ahead, Dakota County Libraries continue to play a vital role in the community. Whether you're stopping by to borrow a book, attend a career workshop or take advantage of self-service hours, these libraries are here to serve residents of all ages. For more information on upcoming projects and services, visit [www.dakotacounty.us/library](http://www.dakotacounty.us/library).

Joe Atkins represents District 2 on the Dakota County Board, which includes South St. Paul, West St. Paul, and Inver Grove Heights. He welcomes feedback. To share comments, concerns or questions, contact him at [Joe.Atkins@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:Joe.Atkins@co.dakota.mn.us) or 651-438-4430.

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**HOLY WEEK:**

**Passion (Palm) Sunday: April 13**  
**Sacred Triduum**

*Chanted and sung liturgies featuring the St. Mary's Schola Choir under the direction of Mr. Josh Wang*

**Holy Thursday Service, April 17**  
*Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 pm, adoration at Altar of Repose until 11 pm*

**Good Friday Service: April 18**  
*Stations of the Cross at noon; Good Friday liturgy at 3 pm; Tenebrae service at 9 pm*

**Holy Saturday, Easter Vigil: April 19, 8:30 pm**

**Easter Sunday Masses: April 20**  
*Mass with organ & cantor 7:30 am; Mass with organ & St. Mary's Schola Choir 9:30 am*

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**Weekend Masses:** Sat. 4:30 pm, Sun. 7:30 & 9:30 am  
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**Holy Week Schedule**

**Maunder Thursday | April 17**  
Maunder Thursday recounts the last night Jesus had with his disciples before his crucifixion.  
11:00 am Worship with Communion  
7:00 pm Worship with Communion. Nursery offered.

**Good Friday | April 18**  
5:00 pm Family Worship  
Families with children of all ages are invited to this multi-sensory walk through Holy Week.  
8:00 pm Tenebrae Service of Darkness  
This service uses the Seven Last Words of Christ from the cross, followed by singing and instrumental music. This service is marked by a progressive dimming of lights and extinguishing of candles.  
Nursery offered.

**Easter Vigil | April 19 | 7:00 pm**  
Gather around fire, word, water, bread, and wine proclaiming through story and song that ours is a God who continuously brings life out of death.  
Nursery offered.

**Easter Sunday | April 20**  
8:30, 9:00, & 11:00 Traditional worship in the sanctuary with choirs, brass, Communion, and the Hallelujah Chorus.  
11:00 am Contemporary worship in the Fellowship Hall with praise music and Communion.  
Nursery offered at all services.

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## ACADEMIC CAMPS

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Camp	Grades	Dates	Time	Cost	Deadline
Art - Cartoon Characters	5-8	Jun 23-26	9:30-11:30 a	\$95	May 31
Cooking - Let's Do Lunch	5-8	Jun 23-26	9:30-11:30 a	\$95	May 31
Chemistry	5-8	Jun 23-26	9:30-11:30 a	\$95	May 31
Engineering	5-8	Jun 23-26	12:00-2:00 p	\$95	May 31
Intro to Mandarin Chinese	5-8	Jun 23-26	12:00-2:00 p	\$95	May 31
Theatre	5-8	Jun 23-26	12:00-2:00 p	\$95	May 31
Beginner Band	4-7	Aug 4-7	1:00-3:00 p	\$95	May 31

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Camp	Grades	Dates	Time	Cost	Deadline
Girls Basketball	4-6	Jun 9-12	8:30-11:30 a	\$95	May 31
Girls Basketball	7-9	Jun 9-12	8:30-12:00 p	\$95	May 31
Boys Basketball	4-6	Jun 16-19	8:30-11:30 a	\$95	May 31
Boys Basketball	7-9	Jun 16-19	12:30-3:30 p	\$95	May 31
Bowling (co-ed)	4-9	Jul 21-24	1:00-4:00 p	\$95	Jun 30
Girls Volleyball	6-9	Jul 21-24	9:00a-12:00 p	\$95	Jun 30
Wrestling (co-ed)	1-9	Jul 21-24	9:00a-12:00 p	\$95	Jun 30
Dance	K-4	Jul 28-31	8:00-10:00 a	\$95	Jun 30
Dance	5-9	Jul 28-31	10:00a-12:00 p	\$95	Jun 30
Soccer (co-ed)	5-9	Aug 4-7	9:00a-12:00 p	\$95	Jun 30
Football	K-4	Aug 4-7	8:00-9:30 a	\$95	Jun 30
Football	5-8	Aug 4-7	9:45-11:45 a	\$95	Jun 30

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